Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of metal fusion bonding components together, said method comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing a flexible articulate tubular device separate from welding apparatus for producing metal fusion for bonding the components, the articulate tubular device having an inlet at one end of the tubular device for receiving a supply of gaseous flux and ~~a terminus at the~~ an other end of the tubular device for discharge of gaseous flux, the flexible articulate tubular device further comprising a plurality of pivot rings and wherein one of the plurality of pivot rings is a terminal pivot ring;

articulating said flexible articulate tubular device to direct said ~~terminus~~ terminal pivot ring along a target weld path to be progressively formed between said components, and wherein said articulating said flexible articulate tubular device comprises pivoting at least one of the plurality of pivot rings; and

supplying a gaseous flux along said flexible articulate tubular device, out said ~~terminus,~~ other end of the tubular device, and toward said target weld path as it is progressively formed.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~ maintaining the position of said ~~terminus~~ terminal pivot ring of said flexible articulate tubular device in accordance with the position of a leading edge of a weld bead along said target weld path.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ articulating is conducted in accordance with said target weld path having an irregular path.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, wherein said ~~step of~~ supplying involves extending a gas feed line through said flexible articulate tubular device.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, further comprising ~~the step of~~ initially positioning said flexible articulate tubular device in relation to said components.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 6 wherein the terminal pivot ring further comprises an optic element, and further comprising ~~the steps of~~:

conveying visual signals from said ~~terminus~~ optic element of said flexible articulate tubular device; and

translating and articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said visual signals.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim [[6]] 7, further comprising ~~the step of~~ further positioning said flexible articulate tubular device so as to trace said target weld path.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim [[8]] 1 and wherein the terminal pivot ring comprises a thermal responsive device, ~~wherein said~~ further positioning the flexible articulate tubular device so as to trace the target weld path ~~step comprises the step of~~ comprising measuring temperature, using the thermal responsive device, at two or more locations at said ~~terminus~~ terminal pivot ring of said flexible articulate tubular device.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 9, wherein said further positioning ~~step~~ further comprises articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said measuring temperature ~~step~~.

11. (Original) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 1, wherein said components comprise at least a pair of tubular components.

12. (Currently Amended) The method of metal fusion bonding as recited in claim 11, wherein said articulating ~~step~~ comprises articulating said flexible articulate tubular device within said at least a pair of tubular components.

13. (Currently Amended) A method of metal fusion bonding an assembly of components, the assembly having an upper side for engagement by welding apparatus and an underside~~, the method~~ comprising ~~the steps of~~:

providing a flexible articulate tubular device separate from welding apparatus for producing metal fusion for bonding the components, the articulate tubular device having an inlet at one end of the tubular device for receiving a supply of gaseous flux and having ~~a terminus at the~~ an other end of the tubular device for discharge of gaseous flux, the flexible articulate tubular device further comprising a plurality of pivot rings and wherein one of the pivot rings is a terminal pivot ring;

positioning said flexible articulate tubular device at an underside of said components in correspondence with a target weld path to be progressively formed between said components;

articulating said flexible articulate tubular device to direct said ~~terminus~~ terminal pivot ring along said target weld path as it is progressively formed, and wherein said articulating said flexible articulating tubular device comprising pivoting at least one of said plurality of pivot rings; and

supplying a gaseous flux through said flexible articulate tubular device out of said ~~terminus~~ other end of the tubular device and toward said target weld path.

14. (Previously Presented) The method as recited in claim 13, wherein said components comprise a plurality of tubular structures and the flexible articulate tubular device is positioned and articulated inside a tubular structure to supply gaseous flux to said target weld path.

15. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim 14 and wherein the terminal pivot ring further comprises an optic element, wherein said positioning ~~step~~ comprises:

conveying visual signals from said ~~terminus~~ optic element of said flexible articulate tubular device; and

translating and articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said visual signals.

16. (Currently Amended) The method as recited in claim ~~14~~ 13 and wherein the terminal pivot ring further comprises a thermal response device, further comprising:

measuring temperature , using the thermal response device, at two or more locations at said ~~terminus~~ terminal pivot ring of said flexible articulate tubular device; and

articulating said flexible articulate tubular device in response to said measuring temperature ~~step~~.

17-22. (Canceled)